

1972 The agony of the Vietnam War, and the radicalization beyond détente

(Speech by Ross Dowson to the League for Socialist Action/Young Socialists and friends of the Vanguard Forum, Toronto, mid-1972)

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Young woman Forum chairperson: Tonight at our Vanguard Forum we will be discussing one of the most important questions facing socialists, indeed facing the world today - the question of Vietnam. What is happening in Vietnam? The country is being turned into a cinder; the heaviest bombing the world has ever known is occurring - literally a process of genocide is taking place. Before the April offensive, there were 26 million craters in Vietnam - this is before the last offensive - caused by bombs - more craters than there are on the moon's surface. There are 900 fighter-bombers and approximately 200 B-52s involved in the air war. More than 90 B-52s - more than 90 - each carrying as much as 30 tons of bombs - were recently sent against a single area near Hué, in the course of only one day. Today, in Vietnam, there are the equivalent of two and a half Hiroshimas, per day. Two and a half Hiroshimas every day. The use of the new, and more accurate murder weapons - such as smart bombs, which are guided to pin-point accuracy by either laser beams or television, the use of pilotless drone planes and many other sophisticated weapons are turning Vietnam into a human and ecological disaster. Toxic chemicals were used in the bombing and shelling of Quang Tri province on July 8th and 10th. There was a broadcast and the broadcast said, in Hanoi, that the chemical weapons had killed hundreds of civilians (. . .) Thousands of others remain desperately ill by these chemicals.

(. . .) Weather modification as a weapon of war has become commonplace, as reported in the **New York Times** by Seymour Hirsh, and I quote: "The United States has secretly been seeding clouds over Vietnam - Laos and South Vietnam - to increase and control the rainfall for military purposes. (. . .) And what of the flooding - one of the questions that is facing the people in Vietnam right now - what of the dykes, the 2,500 miles of dykes in Vietnam. There are 15 million people living in the Red River delta - 15 million people, it is one of the most densely populated areas of the world. Much of the rice, much of the food of the Vietnamese is grown here, and the system of the dykes and the flood-control systems that irrigate, drain and prevent flooding, is now being systematically bombed by American planes(. . .)

(. . .)As Curtis LeMay said (. . .) "bomb Vietnam back into the Stone Age," and they're doing that now(. . .) and Vietnam is isolated now, it's "up against the wall" so to speak, it has few friends. It has us, it has the antiwar movement; and we here, people who support the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination(. . .) we must realize how important our task is at this time. When we say "Out Now!" and we say "End Canada's Complicity!" we must go to the streets(. . .) we are one of the major forces of the worldwide antiwar movement, that can stop that war(. . .)

(. . .)Unfortunately at the last moment John R. was unable to give this speech as scheduled. Ross Dowson, the executive secretary of the LSA, has consented to give the forum. He is going to analyse for us the worldwide situation and how this affects Vietnam.

Thank you (*applause*)

What will be the outcome of this genocidal killing and bombing of Vietnam?

RD: I see as our chairwoman was announcing the substitute speaker for the guest star, the guest star (*John R.*) walked in. I'd like to assure the audience that very shortly, when comrade R. returns from the tour is going to be making next week, he will be a featured speaker here on some appropriate subject, having just returned from an extended stay in Europe.

I'd like to start off my comments, comrades and friends, with a few comments on the last issue of **Labor Challenge**. I assume that since we just had the most successful subscription campaign a few weeks ago, that you are all readers of it, and you read page five, I guess it is, of the last issue of **Labor Challenge**. The lead article is "US bombing of Vietnamese dumps." There are two other articles on the same page: one "US-Moscow détente behind Egyptian moves" and the other "Korea: Pressure on Vietnam."

On the other side, just across from these, there is an article on "Where the Communist Party goes wrong on Vietnam." The central article - the article which has the main appeal to readers of **Labor Challenge**, is the desperate situation in Vietnam which the chairwoman dealt with in quite a poignant way. While I prepared some notes I don't know if I am going to attempt to add anything to it. I think that it was brought home to us very clearly that we are now witnessing, today in Vietnam, **one** of the, perhaps we could say the **greatest** crime perpetrated in world history - that is rather an extravagant statement to declare because most of us live in the era of the Second World War, which devastated a continent and ended in the murder and destruction of entire peoples; thousands and thousands of people.

But in Vietnam we have the destruction of a people and a culture and a key and strategic community in Asia. Perhaps our concern and our interest and our identification with the people of Vietnam are all the more real, and more entrenched and firm, in tribute to the heroism of these people, which the chairwoman described, again, in a very poignant way.

They are confronting the most monstrous accumulation of materiel, created in the shops and factories of the United States and in Canada, designed to destroy on a wholesale basis, in the most ingenious way. Of course as you know American troops have been withdrawn on some scale from Vietnam. But the war has gone on, and on a greater scope. It has gone on, on a technological scale, unforeseen. I didn't have the pleasure of seeing the film shown at the Vietnam Festival the other day, but I understand there was a slide show there that showed the new method of warfare there that has been developed by the most advanced technology known to man today.

These super-bombers - these bombers that can't be sighted by persons on the ground - these bombers that contain bombs of such a destructive capacity that we can hardly visualize it. A few of them are equal to Hiroshima and Nagasaki - the destruction of these two cities that we are commemorating next week. They have tools and devices which allow them to zero in with accuracy that has never been visualized before - one of the great achievements of World War Two, when they developed methods by which they could break through cloud structures, that they could decipher by various methods the defensive mechanisms that were built over important vulnerable military placements so they couldn't be seen by normal methods. Now they have devices where they can zero in bombs from tremendous heights by TV and laser beams.

You know, they're destroying the dykes in Vietnam, but of course it is presented as being incidental - it just happened, at the same time that they talk about their capacity to zero bombs in from tremendous heights on specific targets. I think the truth of the matter is that the American military machine has just about destroyed **all** other targets in Vietnam - it's very difficult to find a target; I suppose from a military point of view one could say, a lone ack-ack gun, a couple of peasants that might be on a dyke, a miserable little rutted road that may be traversing across the top of a dyke, becomes a target of some significance in Vietnam now, because the destruction has been so total, and so absolute.

Yes, it's a war of genocide in Vietnam. It's a war of great heroism by the Vietnamese - a war of commitment to carry through a great social revolution that has been unfolding in Vietnam under such tremendous difficulties.

A treacherous Washington-Moscow-Peking détente hatched in Egypt and Korea

The other two items on the page deal with something else. As a matter of fact, they might seem to be just the polar opposite. Here we have death, destruction, horror compounded in Vietnam; but in Egypt, on the surface we seem to have - peace. Peace. Sadat, who has been talking about moving in against Israel, launching a war - I think 1971 was to have been the year of decision - of course, now we are moving towards détente - a very big détente - in Egypt, which could be presented by some, is being presented by some, as peace.

And then on the other side of the page, we have Korea. I might say a few words about Korea. The bones of Canadian, and American troops are there in Korea, lying there in Korea; it was only a few years ago that a colossal war was waged in Korea, a war that supposedly involved UN troops - that was the guise of the imperialist intervention on the Korean Peninsula - a horrible war which at one stage seemed destined to launch the nuclear disaster, which the world had been poised on for many years.

And now we seem to be faced with - peace - in Korea. These counterposed concepts, on the same page. That's what I would like to talk about tonight. To put the Vietnam War in the picture of the broader panorama of the world as we see it today.

What is happening in the world? It is hard to believe that only a few years ago we were in what was called "the Cold War" - the international Cold War - there wasn't a rumble in the Left in Canada and the United States which wasn't portrayed as being part of the international Communist conspiracy, engineered by the Soviet Union, not so much by Mao Tse-tung, but sometimes we were told that he was the inspirer of some of the rumbles on the Left in Canada. There was an international, a global, conspiracy whipped up by the Soviet Union and by China, against the so-called peace-loving sectors of the world, and of course the so-called peace chief of the world, American imperialism, with its satellites and its allies, which built a tremendous series of implacements - military implacements, I don't have the number at my fingertips, across the world, all zeroed in on the Soviet Union.

I think we showed "Doctor Strangelove" here, in this hall, a few months ago. I guess some of you had not seen that when it came out, but it should have given you a feeling of what it was like, just 10-15 years ago. We were all said to be threatened with instant destruction by the Soviet Union, and this required the total armament of the West, alliances of the Canadian government with the military dictatorships of the most obscene character, such as Portugal - and the tremendous commitment of the Canadian people to armaments, to developing a navy which is sort of in mothballs right now, the development of Bomarc missiles, which are now being stripped back a bit. But the climate then was one of urgency, and fear, and terror, and the situation was - it looked like as it was portrayed in "Doctor Strangelove." (In this film) by some fluke, some insane general could possibly start off the whole process and we would be in H-Bomb disaster.

Hard to believe that this film was produced just a few years ago, and that it is quite the opposite today - a totally different picture today. There is a **massive** change in the picture that confronts us today. I should fill in a little bit that's missing in this US bombing the dykes - not that the editors overlooked anything that we haven't dealt with before. You can't talk about the bombing of the dykes, you can't talk about the continued escalation of the war and the increased peril of the people of Vietnam without saying something about the role of the Soviet Union, the Soviet bureaucracy, and the Peking bureaucracy. When Nixon blockaded the ports of North Vietnam, nothing happened. Except, it was accepted by the Soviet Union, the erstwhile allies of the Vietnamese people, and by the Chinese. Not only was it accepted, but as the escalation of the war continued to reveal in a dramatic way certain other factors in the process. There were many less Soviet surface-to-air missiles moving into the air space against the super-bombers on high. No Soviet supply ships docked; they accepted the blockade; and then we saw that there were very very little reserves, even. The figures have come out to us as to how much pullback the Chinese and the Soviet aid has been in the last period. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, not the Vietnamese - but Egypt - was the chief recipient of military aid from the Soviet regime.

In 1970, Egypt got \$250 million; in 1971, \$420 million of military goods. Ceylon got a great accumulation of military goods - last year it got \$2 million. In the two years that the Soviet bureaucrats gave the Egyptian government, the Sadat regime, \$670 million of military goods, the North Vietnamese got only \$170 millions worth. What's that - about a fourth

of the aid that went to Egypt. The Vietnamese, in their hour of great peril, received a miniscule amount of aid, and then came the complete dry-up with the blockade.

I.F. Stone: "Moscow and Peking gave Nixon the green light to smash Vietnam"

I.F. Stone put it very graphically in the **New York Review of Books** on June 15th in his column. I.F. Stone is the last of the liberals - the picture he presented I thought was totally accurate, but he put it very dramatically: he said, "to speak plainly, the chief running-dogs of US imperialism" - that's to use one of Mao Tse-Tung's phrases, as you know - "now seem to be Brezhnev and Chou En Lai. This is how it must look from Hanoi. Ignominious" - he makes this comparison - "ignominious as Hitler's appeasers were in the 30s, he was never dining as an honoured guest in Paris, London or in Washington while he bombed Guernica or destroyed the Spanish Republic." And of course, as you know, that's exactly what Brezhnev and Mao Tse-Tung and Chou En Lai did. While the bombing escalated, while the ports were mined, Chou En Lai, Mao Tse-Tung, Brezhnev and others, their entourage, they wined and dined Nixon, Kissinger, the representatives of this murder machine - those who had control of the apparatus.

That's what they did, and I think Stone's picture is very accurate - he said "Nixon has been given the green light to smash Vietnam." He went on to say "What have Chou En Lai, what have Mao Tse-Tung, what have Brezhnev - what have they got to sell to the American State Department? They have the blood of the Vietnamese people" - that's what they have - "that blood that seems to plenteous." He went on to point out that Peking - well, Peking bought its admission into the United Nations; so its done - its breaking out of the containment. I suppose you have been reading the press and we don't know all of the deals afoot but we are getting more and more information as time goes on; and we now know that Japan is trying to move in on this situation, and Japan has already conceded recognition of Taiwan as being part of China - there's only one government of China - and they're going to recognize one government and recognize that Taiwan is part of China.

Moscow? What's Moscow getting out of it? Well, I.F. Stone says a few words: he says they're going to get expanded US trade and credits. I think Stone's picture is very accurate - he shows its part of the picture that was revealed to us at that time.

Nixon took a series of initiatives last summer. He moved away from being master of the Cold War machine. He took certain initiatives, made certain gestures in the direction of the Chinese bureaucracy. These moves were predicated on a revelation, if they were needed, of the central nature of the Chinese regime. Just prior to and during that period, the Mao Tse-Tung leadership showed its essential counter-revolutionary character in the process of experience and life. They supported Pakistan in the struggle against Bangladesh. Chou En Lai openly supplied a tremendous amount of money to the Ceylonese - the Bandaranaike regime - the Sri Lanka regime now - in order to crush a popular revolutionary struggle that had broken out on that island.

And of course Nixon watched this procedure - this gesture. And he read the cards right. He knew the situation was ripe for some more news - this was a move on the part of the Chinese, and it was returned in kind by the American government. They were to reverse field quickly. They showed their preparedness, to have a conciliatory attitude, first to China, (ending) at one blow against all the illusions that many on the Left had, that the Chinese regime was in some way different, in its international world policies, that it was in some way perhaps more revolutionary than the Soviet regime - those illusions went out the window. And the Chinese regime showed that, while it theoretically held to the concept of peaceful co-existence, this very pretty phrase that's used to mask what's happening now in Vietnam, that they were prepared to make a deal.

After the division of Korea, détente means continued occupation of the south

That move by Nixon has continued to have a whole series of repercussions on an international scale, and that's what is timely about the comments about Korea. Imagine, after a bloody struggle of some years, when thousands of American troops, Canadian troops, and I believe Australian and British troops lost their lives supposedly protecting South Korea

against the incursions of Soviet and Chinese - they used the word "imperialism" - after troops had been sent in there in reality to crush a popular struggle, a national liberatory struggle of the Korean people, after a division was made of that land; we're now approaching - a fusion. On July 4th, there was a joint North and South government communication which agreed on three principles of unification: one, that this was the result of an independent Korean effort, that it would be carried out by peaceful means and that this national unity would be formed by transcending differences in ideas, ideologies and systems.

One doesn't have to prettify the situation in North Korea, but it is absolutely an established fact that in North Korea there is the economy of a deformed workers' state. I don't want to repeat some of the eulogies and extravagance around Kim Il Sung and his great deeds and achievements in Korea, but Korea has broken out of the hold of imperialism, and laid down some of the essential foundations for a later development through a political revolution for a socialist democracy.

In South Korea, we have nothing but a puppet regime of the American State Department, propped up by American troops under the guise of being United Nations troops. And now, as a by-product of this détente, Nixon's trip to Peking, his alliances and his agreements with Chou En Lai and Mao Tse-Tung, North Korea - the regime of Kim Il Sung - is recognizing the legitimacy of the South Korean regime. It's recognizing the right of US occupation forces to remain in the South - some 40,000 troops. This has been depicted by bourgeois journalists, not noted for their penetration, as nothing but a squeeze play on Vietnam. I think it's very obvious - very obvious - that it's a squeeze play on Vietnam. What are the Vietnamese demanding? They're demanding withdrawal of US troops, and they are fighting for the unity of Vietnam; and here we have the situation where North Korea, and now South Korea which has, after the US, the largest number of troops in Vietnam; we have a situation where the North is recognizing the legitimacy of the division, projecting at some point very far in the future approaching some form of unification, but also the recognition of the **continued occupation** of South Korea, and not demanding that it be returned, that they be withdrawn. As a matter of fact they put it very clearly, stating "a withdrawal of US forces from Korea **need not** precede expanded relations." If that isn't a scenario, a direction to the Vietnamese, to Hanoi, I don't know what it could be considered to be.

That's telling the people of Vietnam, who have been showered with photographs of Chou En Lai and Mao drinking toasts with Nixon, and subsequently photographs of Brezhnev and others drinking toasts with Nixon in Moscow, that's telling the Vietnamese if they don't know that they are being deprived of basic materials to carry on the fight, it's telling them that they should make a deal, à la Korea. In the clearest terms. So, we're moving towards "peace" in Korea. Peaceful co-existence, that's what it is called, but "Peace in Korea," as a directive, as a form of pressure, as a squeeze play on the Vietnamese - that's what peaceful co-existence means in Korea. A sell-out, a betrayal, of the popular struggles of the Vietnamese masses.

Détente with Egypt a setback for the Palestinians, and strands the Vietnamese

Then we have the situation in Egypt, which is dealt with in a few paragraphs in the same page (of **Labor Challenge**.) An astonishing development - as a matter of fact, I think we should be prepared for all kinds of unforeseen developments in the next period. Who could have foreseen the Korean development? I don't think anyone could have speculated that that would take place. A détente which would have such broad implications.

Now we have Egypt. Continuation of the détente. The Soviet forces have been withdrawn; Soviet technicians have been withdrawn from Egypt. Sadat on July 18th announced the termination of the missions of Soviet advisors and military experts. They did this right after, right after the Soviet deal with Nixon. They said so, their representatives said so after receiving Soviet explanations of the Moscow talks with Nixon. Sadat had the pressure taken off him, to deliver, to meet the aspirations of the revolutionary youth of Egypt, who want the liberation of sections of Egypt that have been taken over by the Israeli regime, with the aid of American imperialism. Now they have been deprived of the necessary materiel - that's Sadat's argument - deprived of the necessary material to carry out the struggle.

But he presents the expulsion also - (*RD laughs*) see, it reminds me of a statement that Nixon made at the conclusion of the Moscow talks - he said "there are no losers here - all are winners" - well, speaking for himself and speaking for the Soviet bureaucrats, I suppose there is a profound and essential truth in it, but it seems almost the same comments are applicable to the situation in Egypt - Sadat's been relieved of the pressures to respond to the aspirations of the Egyptian

masses, and allowed to betray a Palestinian revolutionary force. He is able to - the way is clear for him to make a deal with the Israeli government because he now hasn't got the **means** to do otherwise - he is now been enabled to veer the whole orientation of Egyptian foreign policy towards fusion with Libya, where the Premier there is one of the most notorious anti-communists.

So we have a real setback of the whole revolutionary struggle in the Middle East, and a stabilization of the Middle East under the leadership of the Egyptian bourgeoisie. We have a situation in Japan now, too; I think we should touch on several other points. Japan is now moving rapidly into establishing a new relationship with China. Tokyo has had no official relations with Peking until now. But the new premier, Tanaka, two days after taking office, made big overtures to China. The time is ripe, the government announced, for a normalization of relations between China and Japan. They're going to meet certain conditions that China has laid down - they're very modest conditions. China's not demanding very much. Taiwan is being recognized as part of China; Peking is the official government of China.

So what we can see in these three or four places is an attempt to turn back the tide of revolution that has been developing across the world. We could add to it also the new moves towards taking off the edge of the longstanding sharp relations between East Germany and West Germany.

Détente for Nixon, "peace" for Moscow and Peking - what's in the deal?

What's behind this détente? Let's say a few words on this. America of course, American imperialism, is positioned - certainly from the point of view of its military stance - of great power, great authority. But there are some problems in the United States which make it very advisable and very useful for Nixon to attempt to realize this détente, of a broad character. For one thing, he is confronted with elections this fall. It would be very valuable for Nixon to be able to somehow bring an end, to terminate the situation in Vietnam. Since the Vietnamese have shown their preparedness to continue the struggle, then the way that Nixon can carry this out of course is by a tremendous escalation, a tremendous step-up of the war, and an attempt in the next few months to utterly smash the Vietnamese and to carry out this disaster. Of course it will be a disaster beyond the control of Nixon; of course it will be a disaster by the Acts of God - as the bombings of the dykes goes on, because of course it is going to take a little while for that to break through and the dykes are going to be weakened and of course the flood waters are going to break through but this will be an incidental thing and not directly the act of the American bombings - only indirectly so - and it will be an Act of God. But it will be a Godsend for Nixon in the coming election.

Nixon wants to defuse the anti-war movement in the United States - the massive sentiment that by no means has receded among the American peoples, against the war in Vietnam. He wants to ease the inflationary pressures that have been developing in the American economy and to overcome the developing economic crisis that confronts American on an international scale. He wants to beat Japan into China trade, trade with China.

What has the Soviet government got in this? What's behind their acceptance of the situation? How could one come to any understanding of the ignominy of their actions? They want "peace" - that's what the Soviet bureaucrats want. They want to enjoy the privileges of their position, and they want to pacify the populations in the Soviet areas. They want to scale down - they hope to scale down - some of the military expenditures which stand in the way of meeting the demands of the Soviet masses for better living conditions, and they want to open up their economy for trade relations with the USA and to be recipients for new capital for investment.

I think a very important factor in the thinking of the Soviet bureaucrats and in their actions - their betrayal, that's all you can call it, a betrayal without precedent - of the Vietnamese masses and the revolutionary struggle across the world - a big factor is the widening dissention across the Soviet areas. Right now we are reading about the Prague trials. The Prague trials are a very important. They are an attempt to continue to firm up the authority of this regime which has no base in the population, in the masses; to frighten, and to intimidate the revolutionary forces for socialist democracy in Czechoslovakia.

Resistance to russification in the Baltics, East Europe and the Ukraine

There is also of course new information which is coming to our attention, of the rising discontent that is being vocalized in the Baltic States. Just recently we published - **Intercontinental Press** (SWP-FI) recently published - we received a copy of the "Open Letter" from the Latvian communists protesting the russification of Latvia, protesting the distortion of their economy, the transformation of their economy into that of merely producing commodities that bang into the Soviet Union.

We are now getting information of rising discontent in Estonia. Reports in the latest issue of the **Chronicle of Current Events** - number 25, the May issue that has just come out - reporting a movement for self-determination in Estonia, calling for a referendum in Estonia. And in Lithuania we have been informed of a whole series of strikes, a strike in a synthetic rubber factory just recently, and a series of struggles that opened up on May 18th around the funeral of a working-class youth who immolated himself in protest against the russification of Lithuanian life - Lithuanian culture.

At our last forum, our whole forum was dedicated to a discussion of a forum by comrade Harding of the IMG on the russification of the Ukraine, and the rising protests of the various nationalities throughout the Soviet Union. This is indeed a threatening development to the power of the Soviet bureaucracy - probably the most important single aspect of the developing political revolution in the Soviet Union - the rising protests of the oppressed nationalities in the Soviet Union. These protests that are moving in the direction of the restoration of soviet democracy - demanding the implementation of soviet legality and a return to Leninism. What we're seeing in the summitry of Nixon, and Mao Tse-Tung, and Brezhnev, is a manipulation, of the great powers that they control against the interests of the worlds' peoples - the policy of negotiations, the (*interests of the*) top bureaucrats against the needs of the masses. One might say that these deals are temporary, even conjunctural, but they are serving the immediate needs of both, and they are most ominous in their significance to the whole course of the revolutionary struggle on a world scale.

I can only emphasize again and again what the chairwoman said about the importance of the coming actions of solidarity with the Vietnamese struggle. Insofar as revolutionary struggles depend on the materiel, and the ideological, support of the USSR, of the Soviet bureaucracy, this parasitic clique that have fastened themselves upon the remnants of the great October Revolution, and the parasitic clique that have fastened themselves on the residue of the great Chinese Revolution, insofar as these revolutionary struggles are dependent upon them, those struggles are going to go under the greatest duress. They are being betrayed. Vietnam only shows the magnitude to us, of this betrayal.

How do you think Cuba feels in this situation? Tiny, isolated Cuba, some ninety miles off the shore of the United States of America, dependent on Soviet aid. How else can you explain the dramatic speech, the challenge, the plea that Fidel made, in some of his speeches when he made a recent tour of the Soviet areas. Anybody who is dependent on Soviet aid today, material or ideological, know that conditions are those of gravest peril.

Of course, we Trotskyists, who have opposed the deals being made in Korea, who have opposed the deals being made in Egypt, who say it doesn't mean peace at all, are being presented in an article that reveals it on the other side - we are being presented as persons who want "permanent war" - that's the alternative that's posed by the Soviet bureaucrats, to their sell-out of the Vietnamese; they say that Trotskyists, who have committed themselves on a national and international scale to the defence of the Vietnamese Revolution, as top priority of all their struggles; they try to present the Trotskyists as wanting "permanent war."

No, we want support to the Vietnamese Revolution. We want the workers' states and the goods they are capable of producing thanks to the planned economy, the achievement of the October Revolution and the Chinese October, we want them to be placed at the disposal of the world's proletarian and peasant struggles for socialism - that's what we want. We don't want a sell-out! That's what we don't want.

For a united front of socialist states and with full military and economic aid

We want the Soviet areas to form a united front - that's what we've always demanded, a united front against world imperialism. Instead of that we've had the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies at hammer and tong with one another, and now we have them in an alliance - to be sure they are in an alliance - they have a common policy, a common projection, a common strategy on the world political arena, and that's "peaceful co-existence." And if some persons had been confused over the many years of our attack against the concept of peaceful co-existence, I think now we can see the **fruits** of peaceful co-existence, and what it means in life.

It means the **betrayal** of the Vietnamese Revolution, that's what it means. It means the betrayal of the Korean revolutionaries' struggle. It means the betrayal of the Palestinian masses, and it is laying the basis of the betrayal of the Cuban Revolution. That's what it is laying the basis for. Of course there is a myth that goes along with it, you see. When Brezhnev and others say that now, by this, by our not being provoked by the bombing of Haiphong harbour, we're going to win "peace." We're going to **appease** the aggressor.

They project the idea that this is going to establish "peace in our time," that's the whole concept of peaceful co-existence. Of course, it's "peace in our time" in Vietnam at the cost of the Vietnamese Revolution. That's not peace, that's only laying the basis for another war - recurring war. Perhaps Nixon now will be appeased by the few what some might call the "peripheral" victories. I suppose for the Soviet strategists, Vietnam is a "peripheral" question; it certainly doesn't immediately involve the Soviet Union; it doesn't involve China, so the Soviet Union and China have "peace." At what price? The price of a few "peripheral" victories for Nixon - and American imperialism. Is Nixon going to be satisfied with those few "peripheral" victories? You know, with their cynicism - I've heard some Stalinists talk in this way - well, maybe you know, some sectors of the world working class are expendable; it's regrettable, it's most unfortunate, but for the overall victory, the future of mankind resides in the power of the Soviet regime, and China - the really big factors - and maybe its necessary to make a few deals - to suffer a few of these peripheral losses.

But is that going to appease the appetite of American imperialism? Well, of course American imperialism is thankful for these peripheral victories - no question it is thankful for them - and it would take the pressure off, for a short time. Quite possibly, for a short time. But nobody can have any illusions that there will be any real, long-range (changes) of any real character. For instance, one of the achievements of the Nixon talks in Moscow was an agreement to prevent naval confrontations on the high seas. Comrade (Joe) Hansen in **Intercontinental Press (SWP)** which all of you should be following, particularly in this period of world politics, points out the meaning of this prevention of naval confrontations, which was very quickly revealed by the failure of the Chinese and the Soviet Union to attempt to run the blockade in North Vietnam.

The fraud of the SALT arms limitation accord laid bare

But another of the big victories was to be of course that an accord was going to be worked out in the next two years of strategic arms limitations talks, the so-called "SALT." This was said to be one of the great achievements -- well, maybe North Vietnam is going to go, but we're going to take the arms drive off (our backs); America is going to pull back its encirclement of the Soviet Union. But, as comrade Hansen points out, the **Wall Street Journal** took all this with a grain of salt. This US journal, the **Wall Street Journal**, surely a very responsible voice of American business - their staff reporter said "President Nixon has declared to Moscow that an agreement in this area could begin to turn our countries away from a wasteful and dangerous arms race, and towards more production for peace." I haven't been following the **Canadian Tribune (the CPC journal)** very closely, but I am sure they gave great weight to this development - as a matter of fact the newspaperman went on to say "when it comes, perhaps it will undoubtedly buoy the hopes of people throughout the world, but some of the initial optimism is likely to fade as the narrow nature of the pact becomes clear. For the hard reality is that the SALT agreement is riddled with loopholes, because it doesn't limit the quality of the weapons involved. The two superpowers can continue to upgrade their offensive nuclear missiles(. . .)" - of course for the **Wall Street Journal** it's two superpowers - you see, America is always on a defensive stance against the "superpower," the USSR - "adding more warheads, more destructive warheads, and they can freely persist in developing new bombers, new submarines and other conventional war machines. Thus the accord won't halt either the international arms competition or the seemingly inexorable growth of the US defence budget, now climbing above \$83 billion."

And, of course, this was very rapidly affirmed by military experts in the USA; they affirmed that the SALT agreement won't interfere with **any** of the projected American strategic programs - and as a matter of fact, they've got a military budget now which is going up \$5 billion to \$6 billion annually to the middle of this decade.

So, you have to look at it, as I approached the pages of **Labor Challenge** to show the continued war or destruction of the war against the Vietnamese, and the counterpoint of the situation in Korea and the situation in Egypt; you also have to look at the struggles of the Vietnamese as being one of the increasing difficulties of world imperialism that forces them into this situation. US imperialism has been **compelled** to reverse field, to move and edge back from the most overt, the most declared stance of Cold War - compelled to pull back. And able to pull back, and still continue its aims, thanks to the treachery of the Soviet bureaucracy, thanks to the treachery of the Mao Tse-Tung regime.

Now the alternative to peace co-existence is not revolutionary war, or "permanent war" - adventurism - it is a continued identity by Canadians, by Canadian workers, by Canadian students, by those who have been partisans of the anti-war movement, to escalate their actions against the war in Vietnam, to escalate their demonstrations of solidarity with the Vietnamese, now in their supreme hour of peril. Another alternative, and the most important alternative which we must come to grasp, to the concept of peaceful co-existence, this counter-revolutionary strategy of the Soviet and Mao Tse-Tung bureaucracy, is a strategy of world revolution.

Trotskyist strategy of mass mobilizations is the key to victory for Vietnam

That strategy is based on support for revolutionary uprisings that have been taking place in a successive number of countries, and for class-struggle policies, united on a world scale; the alternative to peaceful co-existence is the alternative that is projected united - in the world party of the Fourth International. If, as I say, and I believe it is correct, that all those struggles in the world that depend on the material aid and the ideological support of the Kremlin and Peking are now in great peril, we must say that even more pressing upon us, is the development of the class struggle in our country, on the North American continent. The success of revolutionary struggles in this country we've always known are the key to the total struggle. We know that this is the heartland - the heartland of imperialism - that this where the showdown must take place with the imperialist horror-mongers, the imperialist counter-revolutionaries.

This makes our struggle the key struggle. That should be a great source of conviction and satisfaction to us in this room today. To know that our actions, and solidarity with the Vietnamese, are the key actions in the next period. We are the ones to whom this path has fallen - to uphold the struggle of the Vietnamese. To give them heart and spirit in their struggle, to protest the actions of the American imperialists and the betrayal of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies, and to build a movement, the type of movement, that is necessary to carry forward not only a popular campaign in solidarity with the Vietnamese, but to develop this movement on a broader scale so that it takes on a **class** character, so that it takes on a very clear, sophisticated, revolutionary character.

It's through this struggle, to build the forces of socialist revolution in America, in Canada - that is the key strategy for the defence and development of the revolution on a world scale.

Thank you very much (*applause*)

Question & discussion period: The radicalization beyond détente

RD: (. . .) I'd like to add a few words on a couple of questions that came up. I didn't deal with the détente in Canada, nor did I speculate on the future of the war, in Vietnam. I think it is very difficult for us to talk about what is going to happen in Vietnam. Nobody can really say with any certainty (. . .) As things now stand, it would seem that the revolution in Vietnam is finding in its depths such resources that it is being able to continue the struggle - despite the betrayals of Mao Tse-Tung and Brezhnev, despite that, and despite the escalation of the war by American imperialism.

However one cannot be sure that they can continue to carry on this struggle; that's why we are involved in actions here, and why persons like ourselves across the world - if we were dependent upon the antiwar movement in Canada, it would be a relatively feeble thing, as important as it is. There have been massive antiwar movements that have been taking more and more into the streets in the last year, across the globe and I think this is a really important factor in the struggle.

But maybe we're at a very critical conjuncture right now, and it's possible that the Vietnamese, despite their heroism, will not be able to stand this pressure, and that the leadership of the struggle there will make a deal; make a compromise. That will not be an irremediable blow against the revolution. I tried to say a few words indirectly about the struggle in Canada, and the struggle elsewhere than in the areas which are dependent upon Soviet aid. The radicalization has been a worldwide phenomenon. Vietnam has been a very important component of that radicalization and I agree

with the contribution of comrade Lomas that it is the **key** factor in the radicalization, and that it is the **test** today of all revolutionaries, but if we can visualize the destruction of the Vietnamese struggle at this stage, that doesn't mean that the Revolution has suffered a blow from which it cannot recover.

Certainly it would be a tremendous blow in Vietnam, but the radicalization is more profound - in America, I would say, just talking about America, and in England today (. . .) - than (simply the support for) the Vietnamese struggle. There's the class struggle, that's rooted in the crisis of capitalism, in all the respective countries, which Comrade Roberts will deal with in the United States. In Canada, I'd like to say a few words about Canada. What would the collapse of the Vietnamese struggle mean to Canadian workers and Canadian students, the whole radicalization in Canada?

It would be a serious setback. It has been an important factor in the radicalization of the students, who at this stage are the main radicalizing force in North America. It would be a setback - and a setback for the high school students, but you know the radicalization has its own causes. The students of the University of Toronto and York University and other campuses didn't vote Young Socialist and put Young Socialists on the administrative councils because of the position that the YS had on Vietnam. There are substantial causes of the radicalization of the students in North American and Canadian campuses that are rooted in the educational system. So Vietnam is a generalizing factor in this process, but - and I tried to make that demarcation - the radicalization isn't dependent and isn't under the control of the Maoists or the Stalinists in this country - I didn't say anything about the Communist Party in passing because anybody in Canada knows that the CP is no longer an important factor, including the Peace Congress, which is bankrupt - both politically and physically. The CP doesn't play an important role in the class struggle in this country - it has disoriented (some) but doesn't have any substantial forces.

So what happens in this area - the détente - as reflected in the CP milieu, doesn't have big repercussions in Canada. In Canada, the radicalization (. . .) has its own deep roots - Vietnam has been important for us for the whole previous stage because it has radicalized a new generation - but I must say thanks to the Vietnamese, no matter what the outcome in Vietnam, that radicalization is under way, and has been consolidated, not as substantially as we could desire - I would think that the considerable forces of revolutionary youth in this hall tonight, in YS halls across Canada, come out of the Vietnamese war generation, but they have found themselves as revolutionaries, and they are making connections, through the anti-Vietnam war movement, into other actions, into the NDP, and Waffle, and in the union movement; they're beginning to make connections with the rooted forces, the class component, of the developing struggle in this country. So we've got a great deal out of the Vietnamese Revolution. On the struggle of the heroes of the Vietnamese peoples, this movement, the revolutionary movement, is being built in this country.

In the next stage, the movement will be built with workers entering the struggle

But substantially, the decisive cadre of the revolutionists in this country are not going to come out of this - cannot come out of that - they're going to come out of the contradictions within North American capitalism, and out of the experiences of the working class. That's the contradiction which is partly posed by another question here - what is the Trotskyist movement, what is the revolutionary movement in North America? It is not proletarian - not because we don't desire it to be and because we haven't attempt to make it proletarian; but it is not substantially proletarian. The workers of this country have moved out and have radicalized but on a relatively low level at this stage - to the stage you might say - not trying to formalize it, it's got contradictions - but to the stage of NDP consciousness, political reformism, trade union consciousness; they have developed that degree of consciousness.

But the youth who have been touched by the radicalization of Vietnam and the international radicalization are becoming I think more important components, and coming into touch with that native, integrated element of the radicalization coming out of capitalist contradictions (. . .) The Left in this country is primarily student, is primarily youth, and is now only beginning to make some of the connections to build a substantial proletarian connection. That's how we see; why the chairman made the reference to the Waffle as a necessary experience; we see that the new youth radicals are going to make connections with proletarian radicals on the developing struggle in this country, through the NDP to a large degree, which is based on the trade union movement. The Waffle did make substantial beginnings of connections with trade union elements in the NDP.

But I must say there is a developing radicalization out of the native processes at work in Canadian capitalism. Someone excepted Quebec, excepted Montreal - this is not tolerable, for Canadians - Quebec is part of the revolutionary development in this country, perhaps the most dramatic and most profound radicalization experience at this stage - but it's part of our process. The Québécois are locked in struggle, in their general strike, against the Federal Government, essentially, against the Canadian and American imperialists who dominate the economy of the Québécois, and against the federal government and its agents, the Bourassa government (in Quebec City). This is an important component of the radicalization in this country, and we are making a connection through our press, **Libération**, and through our organizations La Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere and La Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes (. . .)

We are now seeing also a radicalization taking place among some of the most deprived sectors of the working class; for instance right now there is an important struggle taking place among the western hospital workers - that's not accidental, not a flash-in-the-pan. We're seeing a whole new development where the lower, the most deprived areas of the working class are starting to become unionized; this is an important new development.

So I think that the détente, insofar as it has been reflected by the influence of Stalinism in the Canadian class struggle, is not too relevant. The class struggle is gradually sharpening in this country, and we can see an increasing radicalization taking place with the cadre being picked up on the grounds where they can be picked up, you see. Revolutionaries don't have a choice - they can't recruit where there's no real radicalization yet taking place. We - the League for Socialist Action - recruited through our sensitive understanding of the Vietnam struggle and its importance; the student radicalization has consolidated where it could consolidate - and by so doing, it is preparing the cadre in order to take advantage of the next radicalization as it sweeps into the ranks of the working class.

(further contributions to the Forum continue)

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